

for the failures that have hurt families, cost his party the House, and left only 16 percent of Americans better off financially now than they were on Inauguration Day.

And the President's thin and paltry discussion of his failing foreign policy was downright alarming. Europe is in the grip of the continent's worst violent conflict since World War II. China is gaining as the largest strategic threat to American security since the Soviet Union. The Taliban has reinstated their oppressive regime and safe terrorist haven that America and our allies chased out more than two decades ago.

North Korea continues to modernize its nuclear and missile programs, making steady progress toward the leader's goal of being able to deliver Armageddon to our doorstep.

The Iranian regime continues to advance its own WMD programs while sponsoring terror campaigns all across the Middle East. Make no mistake, this radical regime is willing and eager to kill Americans if it is not deterred. And while the Iranian people protest nationwide against a brutal theocracy, President Biden couldn't even muster one mention of their struggle.

This is the state of the world on President Biden's watch. This is the state of America's interests under his leadership. But President Biden did not even mention the grave and growing challenges we face from abroad until the tail end of his lengthy remarks.

The President downplayed the threat posed by the People's Republic of China and claimed without any evidence that the United States was in its strongest position to compete with China in decades. I am not sure in what universe those remarks apply. Here in the real world, China's intelligence services just got a closeup look of the entire U.S. mainland. Reports indicate Chinese hypersonic weapons and land-based ICBM launchers exceed our own. And President Biden's last budget proposal tried to cut our national defense funding after inflation. The Commander in Chief seems more preoccupied with hidden "resort fees" than hidden Chinese malware in our phones, computers, and high-tech infrastructure.

Then there is Ukraine. President Biden said Putin's invasion of Ukraine has been a test of America's and our allies' resolve. That is certainly true, but, like the Chinese balloon, the Ukraine crisis was also a test of the Biden administration's response time, and they fell quite short.

Republicans tried to push the administration to better equip Ukraine to defend itself before the tanks rolled and to act more quickly and decisively in the early weeks to try to prevent a protracted stalemate. The indecision, hand-wringing, and sluggishness have carried a heavy price indeed. The President can't even get the bully pulpit right.

There is an overwhelmingly persuasive case that aiding Ukraine strongly

and directly serves our core American national interests, but President Biden seems incapable of articulating any of it. It is top Republicans who are filling the leadership vacuum, connecting the dots, and making the case. Yet again, Presidential leadership is missing in action, and it is Republicans filling the void. So let's hope President Biden's upcoming defense budget request will treat our national security challenges more seriously than his speech did on Tuesday night.

With fewer than one in five Americans calling the state of our Union strong, President Biden needed to pivot, but he failed to. He spent the wordiest State of the Union in American history making excuses, doubling down, and spinning alternate realities. But if Washington Democrats will not pivot, the American people will pivot away from them. It is already starting.

Seated behind the President Tuesday night was the new Republican Speaker of the House, KEVIN MCCARTHY, and following him on the airwaves was the youngest Governor in America, Sarah Huckabee Sanders of Arkansas—part of a whole wave of Republican Governors who are laser-focused on fighting crime, improving education, and lifting more working families into prosperity.

The American people know which principles and solutions will bring our country back, and they are seeing which party actually provides them.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following the 11 a.m. vote today, the Senate recess until 1 p.m.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, on Tuesday, President Biden delivered his State of the Union Address to Congress, and in this time of divided government, I was glad to see the President making more than one nod to bipartisanship. I do think this moment, with power split between Democrats and Republicans, provides a real oppor-

tunity to work together, to move away from the extreme partisanship of the past couple of years and make some real progress on some of the issues facing us.

But the President's speech also left me concerned because the President demonstrated almost no awareness of what actually happened as a result of his policies. Indeed, at times, it seemed as if the President had lived through a different reality from the one most Americans have been experiencing over the past 2 years.

The President rattled off a list of his supposed economic achievements, and I say "supposed" because he left out some vitally important context. He claimed credit for the historic job creation while leaving out the essential detail that a lot of that job creation was simply a result of the economy naturally adding back jobs temporarily lost during the pandemic. He talked about wage growth while leaving out the fact that real wages have declined—have declined—because of inflation over his Presidency. And he appeared to take credit for the fact that inflation has declined somewhat in recent months while neglecting to mention that it was his administration and congressional Democrats who helped create our inflation crisis with their American Rescue Plan spending spree.

Nor did the President spend any time discussing just how bad inflation still is and how many Americans are still suffering. Inflation in December was 6.5 percent. The last time inflation was that bad was in 1982—1982—40 years ago. I am glad inflation has declined somewhat, but I don't think the President has a lot to be congratulating himself about. Even if prices stopped increasing tomorrow, Americans would still be paying thousands of dollars more over the next year to achieve the same standard of living that they had when the President took office.

Again, the President and congressional Democrats and their American Rescue Plan spending spree bear a huge part of the responsibility for this situation. Or to quote former Obama economic adviser, Jason Furman:

The original sin was an oversized American Rescue Plan.

Another of the supposed economic achievements the President talked about Tuesday night was cutting the deficit. Yes, cutting the deficit. Well, let me just quote CNN on that claim. This is a quote:

Independent analysts say Biden's own actions, including his laws and executive orders, have had the overall effect of adding to current and projected future deficits, not reducing those deficits.

Let me just repeat that:

Independent analysts say Biden's own actions, including his laws and executive orders, have had the overall effect of adding to current and projected future deficits, not reducing those deficits.

The President failed to meaningfully address the economic crisis that his policies have helped to create. Instead,